

Suddenly Sleepy Saturday is an effort to lead the estimated 65,000 Americans who are living with undiagnosed narcolepsy to a proper diagnosis and treatment. This day of awareness will allow for expanding knowledge of life with narcolepsy and will allow participating communities to better support people who struggle with the challenges of this chronic neurological disorder. I am pleased that many South Dakotans, including those in Aberdeen, SD, will be commemorating Suddenly Sleepy Saturday and raising awareness of narcolepsy.

I urge all citizens to support the search for the cause, cure, and prevention of narcolepsy and assist those individuals and families who deal with this devastating disorder on a daily basis.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, on March 8 we will commemorate International Women's Day, which, since 1911, has given us an opportunity to pause and assess the status of women worldwide. Since that time, we have seen great achievements by women in many parts of the world. The last century began with women in the United States fighting for the right to vote, while today we see the first real chance that a woman will be elected President.

While substantial progress has been made here and in other countries, millions of women around the world continue to live in poverty and fear. Women are denied decent health care, denied economic opportunities, denied education, and denied security for themselves and their children. Women face epidemic levels of violence. One in three women worldwide will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime. In some countries, that is true for 70 percent of women. No country is immune. From the trafficking of women in Eastern Europe, to "honor" killings in the Middle East, to the use of rape as a weapon of war in Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, violence against women and girls crosses all borders and affects women in all social groups, religions and socioeconomic classes.

A recently released survey of 1,500 women in Iraq by Women for Women International indicates that women there are suffering high levels of violence. The survey found that 63.9 percent of those surveyed believe that violence against women is increasing for reasons including lack of respect for women's rights and a worsening economy. The report quotes a police chief in the southern city of Basra who says that "[r]eligious vigilantes have killed at least 40 women this year . . . because of how they dressed, their mutilated bodies found with notes warning against 'violating Islamic teachings.'"

Violence has a profound impact on the health and development of countries worldwide. Violence against women and girls violates their basic

human rights. It impedes women's full and active participation in their communities and societies. And it limits our effort to foster development around the world. Violence prevents girls from going to school, stops women from holding jobs, and limits access to critical health care for women and their children. We can't eradicate poverty and disease unless we prevent and respond to the violence women face in their own homes and communities. And we can't empower women to become active in civic life and promote peace, prosperity and democracy unless they personally are free from fear of violence. It is no surprise, then, that at this year's World Economic Forum, Secretary Rice stated that if she could focus on one thing in developing countries, it would be the empowerment of women.

Violence against women is a global health crisis, not just because so many women and girls are injured and die but also because the violence interferes with efforts to save the lives of pregnant women and babies. Rape increases vulnerability to HIV-AIDS transmission. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, women account for close to three-quarters of those living with HIV-AIDS between the ages 18 and 24.

The picture is grim and can be discouraging. But the good news is that local organizations are working in communities around the world with courage, sensitivity, and success to help women overcome violence at home, in school, and at work. Governments are bringing together all sectors of their country to try to prevent and end abuse. But they need our help.

We have made tremendous progress in reducing violence against women here in the United States since we passed the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, in 1994. It is time to throw our weight and leadership behind efforts to help women and their families worldwide lead safer, healthier lives. Stopping gender-based violence isn't just the moral thing to do; it is also smart diplomacy since violence contributes to the poverty, inequality, and instability that threaten our security.

Last fall, Senator LUGAR and I introduced S. 2279, the International Violence Against Women Act. This groundbreaking, bipartisan legislation would ensure that our foreign assistance programs include efforts to end gender-based violence.

We would accomplish this goal in three ways:

First, we propose to reorganize and rejuvenate the gender-related efforts of the State Department by creating one central office—the Office for Women's Global Initiatives, directed by a Senate-confirmed Ambassador who reports directly to the Secretary of State. The coordinator will monitor and coordinate all U.S. resources, programs, and aid abroad that deal with women's issues, including gender-based violence. This centralization will ensure the most efficient use of taxpayer funds.

Second, we mandate a 5-year, comprehensive strategy to combat violence against women in 10 to 20 targeted countries. We would allocate \$175 million a year to support programs dealing with violence against women in five areas: the criminal and civil justice system, health care, access to education and school safety, women's economic empowerment, and public awareness campaigns that change social norms.

Third, we know through terrible experience that women and girls are especially vulnerable to violence in humanitarian crises and in conflict and postconflict situations. Reports of refugee women being raped while collecting firewood, soldiers sexually abusing girls through bribery with token food items, or women subjected to torture as a tool of war are horrific. The act requires training for workers and peacekeeping forces and establishes reporting mechanisms and other emergency measures.

The issue of violence against women and girls is complex, and our legislation is ambitious. We are mindful that no country has a perfect record or all the answers. Yet Congress has a long and proud history of tackling complex international problems, most recently the epidemic of HIV-AIDS and the crime of human trafficking.

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said "Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equity, development and peace." We could not agree more. Our International Violence Against Women Act brings together, for the first time, coordinated American resources and leadership to this global issue.

We believe the time is now for the United States to get actively engaged in the fight for women's lives and girls' futures. There is no better way to commemorate International Women's Day.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION REFORM ACT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to express my complete support for H.R. 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act, which passed the Senate yesterday with an overwhelming bipartisan majority. Regrettably, I was unable to vote on final passage of H.R. 4040, as I had a previous commitment that prevented me from being there. However, I believe so strongly in the Government's responsibility to maintain the highest level of product safety that I wanted the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to reflect how pleased I am that the Senate passed H.R. 4040, after substituting the text of S. 2663 as amended, and to extend my congratulations to the bill's principal